

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 17, 2014

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy  
and Water Development  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy  
and Water Development  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein and Senator Alexander:

We write respectfully to request your continued support for funding for the recovery of the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in the fiscal year 2015 Energy and Water Development appropriations bill or in any continuing resolution. For FY15, WIPP needs an additional \$113 million above FY14 to ensure ongoing recovery efforts are maintained and the mine can safely resume operation.

WIPP is the nation's only deep geologic repository for transuranic nuclear weapons waste and an integral part of the environmental clean-up of Cold War programs at Department of Energy defense sites around the country. WIPP has been closed since February following a fire and a radiation release. DOE released a recovery plan for the plant on September 30, and the final report on the cause of the release will soon be finalized.

We believe it is essential that WIPP have additional funding in FY15 to continue implementing the recovery plan, including all of the recommendations of the Accident Investigation Boards. Though the president's original FY15 budget request for WIPP did not reflect the additional funding required to respond to the accidents, we very much appreciate your including additional funding in your subcommittee's draft bill for FY15 to support of WIPP's recovery. WIPP's total required funding level for FY15 is now estimated to be \$334 million, including \$5.5 million for safeguards and security. Without the additional funding recovery efforts could be delayed.

Any accident or release of radioactive materials in WIPP is unacceptable; however, we are confident WIPP can be restored to operation while protecting the safety of the workers and the community. As you complete work on the appropriations bill for FY15, we urge you to include the full \$334 million WIPP needs for recovery.

Sincerely,



TOM UDALL  
United States Senator



MARTIN HEINRICH  
United States Senator